



## **Planning and Housing Committee PH25.10 – A New Regulatory Framework for Multi-tenant Houses**

Dear Members of the Planning and Housing Committee

We are writing on behalf of the Right to Housing in Toronto (R2HTO), a coalition of organizations and individuals working to support the implementation of the human right to housing by the City of Toronto.

The affordable housing crisis in Toronto has forced many residents of our city to live in unsafe and inadequate homes. Too many Torontonians do not have affordable housing options and live in a constant state of housing precarity. Too many are experiencing homelessness and forced into the emergency shelter system. When the City of Toronto made a commitment to advance the right to housing through its housing policy, it made a promise to ensure that its housing policies will lead to affordable, adequate and accessible housing for everyone in the city. Our residents need adequate housing choices. We need our city to prioritize solutions that not only build affordable housing, but also preserve the affordable homes we currently have.

One of the main sources of deeply affordable housing in Toronto are multi-tenant houses. For decades, these have been an important part of our city's housing stock, where residents call home. But for many of these residents, the current by-laws have forced them to live in illegal multi-tenant houses that operate in the shadows. These residents live in unsafe and unhealthy conditions but are too afraid to have their voices heard, fearing that they will lose their home.

We are writing today to provide our support for the City of Toronto's policy framework to regulate multi-tenant housing. We urge the City of Toronto to legalize multi-tenant houses across the city. The current rules that ban multi-tenant houses in some parts of the city are discriminatory against many of our residents. The Ontario Human Rights Commission has written at length about the discriminatory nature of these bylaws. We too have urged the City time and again to protect its residents and legalize

multi-tenant homes across the city. This new framework will finally bring an end to a long-standing discriminatory housing policy.

While we are in support of the proposed framework, we are also aware that sometimes good policies lead to unintended consequences. One of the main concerns that we have heard from residents, housing workers, and advocates from across the city is whether the current framework may lead to the closure of some of the homes in operation today. We hope that this is not the intention of the proposed framework, especially as the City proposes a phased implementation plan. We therefore urge the City to make a commitment to a city wide “no displacement” policy that will protect people living in multi-tenant housing from becoming homeless. It is vital that the efforts to improve the conditions of these homes for their residents are balanced with the efforts to support landlords of these homes to meet the new standards.

As always, R2HTO is available to the City, to discuss this regulatory framework and provide recommendations that ensure no tenant is displaced from their home.

Thank you,

On Behalf of Right to Housing in Toronto (R2HTO)